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February 14, 1953

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. ARTHUR S. FLEMMING
Acting Director
Office of Defense Mobilization

From : W. Y. Elliott

Subject: Highlights of Yesterday's Meeting with Cutler on the
National Security Council.

I have already given you some verbal background on this matter in our brief chat about the meeting and about the memorandum I did for you on the NSRB.

The following points are for your information in relation to the problems of the ODM:

1. It was the unanimous view of the group that met with Cutler, including Van Bush, and for a period last night, Gordon Gray, as well as Leva, Morgan, Palmer Putnam, and me, that if the statute governing membership of the NSC is to be amended, it should still include the third leg of the tripod, which contains the Secretaries of State and Defense, by naming the head of whatever agency the President designates to bear responsibility for industrial mobilization in relation to the national economy. This, undoubtedly, at the present time would mean the ODM, plus the NSRB. We suggested that the statute should say also whatever other agency the President himself should designate, leaving out confirmation by the Senate.

basic 2. It should be made perfectly clear that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Director of the CIA, like the Executive Secretary and the head of the Psychological Strategy Board, should attend meetings but only in a service capacity, not as members. We do not rule out the possibility that C. D. Jackson may develop in importance to a point of membership later, and we felt that other agencies than Treasury should in practice be invited only on an ad hoc basis. Pressure by the AEC and the Budget Bureau for permanent and regular invitations seemed to be, in the judgment of this group, out of line.

Instead of having civilians on a permanent "VIP" membership basis, we felt that ad hoc appointments for specific tasks would be

- 2 -

Memorandum for Dr. Arthur S. Flemming

much better than regular membership. Regular membership would create too many difficulties.

3. We were unanimous in feeling that the Vice President should preside in the absence of the President, until Gray came in. He and Leva accepted this with some reluctance but finally came around. It was felt unanimously that the Vice President should have a special assistant, though Leva did some headshaking over this at first. This special assistant should be invited to listen in at the Senior Staff meetings but should not be a full member.

4. In the course of the discussion, the Senior Staff full membership was to be cut back to pretty much the full membership of the Council itself but that a much more flexible use of ad hoc invitations and a more general practice of inviting the CIA, Joint Chiefs of Staff, and other "service" representatives to participate in the discussions would be in order.

I send you a copy of my letter to Cutler on the peculiar problem of his own nuclear staff. As you will see from this, I think he did an absolutely amazing job in running off this meeting -- systematically, interestingly, evocatively, provocatively, and with the utmost good sense and judgment in assessing our respective contributions.

If anyone can cure the inherent, as well as the accidental, defects of the National Security Council by sheer power of leadership and a combination of modesty with excellent sense and judgment, Bobby Cutler is the man. I feel much cheered up by the meeting and I think you will be later.

WYE:bj